

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITY

PETER LIDDELL, D.S.C.
Chairman

D.J. KINNERSLEY
Chief Executive

Telephone: Penketh 4321

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Dawson House,
Great Sankey,
Warrington,
WA5 3LW

4th September, 1974.

To: Members of the South Lancashire
Fisheries Advisory Committee

Dear Sir,

Please attend a meeting of the Committee at 2.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY,
11TH SEPTEMBER, 1974, at the offices of the LANCASHIRE RIVER UNIT,
48 WEST CLIFF, PRESTON, for consideration of the following business.

Yours faithfully,

R. E. WOODWARD,

Director of Administration.

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th June, 1974. (Previously circulated)
3. "Taking Stock" - A Report to the Association of River Authorities.
4. "Coarse Fisheries" - A Report of the Working Party of the Association of River Authorities.
5. Purchase of Fisheries.
6. Langcliffe Hatchery.
7. Fisheries Estimates - 1974/75.
8. Fisheries Activities.
9. Schedule of Meetings, 1974/75.
10. Any other business.

SOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE11TH SEPTEMBER, 1974Association of River Authorities' Report - "Taking Stock"

In accordance with Minute No. 9 of the previous meeting of this Committee, the Regional Fisheries Officer presents the following comments on the report, "Taking Stock":-

1. Chapter I

Reference is made in the fourth paragraph on page 2 to the relationship between netting effort and rod catches. While this may be relevant in certain contexts, it is considered that a more important relationship is that between fishing of all kinds and the ultimate escapement which represents the spawning stock. This aspect is also touched upon in Chapter X, pp.41/42. Provided that fish have adequate access to suitable spawning streams, there are few rivers which would not benefit, particularly at the present time, from a considerable increase in spawning stock. There is no power to limit the number of rod and line licences issued by the Authority. This is made clear by Sections 6 and 7 and Schedule 1 of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act, 1972. Section 6(2) requires the Authority, by means of a licensing system, to regulate fishing for salmon and trout and, except so far as excused by the Minister, by such means to regulate fishing for freshwater fish of any description or eels. Section 7 of the Act authorises the Minister, on the application of the Authority, by order to limit for not more than ten years the number of fishing licences issued in any year for fishing in any part of their area for salmon or trout other than rainbow trout with any instrument so specified other than rod and line. Paragraph 15 of Schedule 1 of the Act requires that subject to Section 7, a fishing licence shall, on payment of the duty in respect of the particular instrument, be granted by the Authority to every applicant who at the time of application is not disqualified from holding a fishing licence.

Accordingly, the only control over the number of licences to be granted is by order under Section 7 of the Act for fishing other than by rod and line.

2. Chapter III

Although there is always liable to be some escapement from any net, monofilament nylon gilling nets are particular offenders in this respect. In view of the resulting damage to fish, and the subsequent fungal and bacterial infection which is likely to develop, resulting ultimately in the death of affected fish, the use of these nets is undesirable and should be prohibited. (Recommendation No. 1 on page 45 confirms this).

3. Chapters V and VI

It is made clear (p. 20) that catch returns by netsmen cannot be relied upon any more than can those by rod fishermen. This fact could have a considerable impact upon the figures in Table IV (p. 23) and, on the basis of the difference quoted, could reduce the highest figure in Column 6 from £1.38 to £0.55 and the lowest figure (excluding the 'special case' of Northumberland, and also Somerset and Hampshire where the catches are, in any case,

negligible) from 8p to 3p. Even without this adjustment, and without taking account of the proviso at the foot of the table, most of the Column 6 figures appear remarkably low in relation to the current market value of salmon. If this view is accepted, and if account is taken of the information given in Table IX (p. 34), there appears to be a case for upward revision of either net or rod licence duties in various areas, according to whether the rod/net catch ratio in Column 4 of Table IX is greater or less than unity. Again, it must be remembered that this ratio is affected by inaccuracies in returns.

4. Chapter VII

With illegal netting, as with all forms of crime, activity will persist as long as the activity is profitable and the penalties, on detection and conviction, minimal. The prevailing price of salmon, and the demand for it, are sufficient to provide a strong incentive to the illegal taking of these fish by netting and other means. The difficulties of law enforcement both on rivers and offshore are such that relatively few offenders are brought to court, and the derisory penalties all too often imposed there are no deterrent whatever to harden criminals, as witness the fact, quoted on p. 43, that one gang had been apprehended no less than 13 times. (One wonders what proportion this represents of the occasions on which they were operating).

5. Chapter X

All the points raised in this chapter are worthy of note, but comment may be made on the following in particular:-

(a) Predation

It is considered that predation of juvenile salmon in the rivers, and particularly during migration to the sea, which is the final, vital stage of their river life, is at least of equal importance to any predation which may occur in the sea, which is, in any case, impossible to influence. Of special significance is the position which might be expected to arise in the event of the construction of an estuarial barrage. This would result in the formation of a large, fresh-water lake at the lower end of the river or rivers flowing into the estuary. This lake would undoubtedly develop, either naturally or by the action of man, a population of fish which would be likely to include either pike or large brown trout or both. Together with bird predators, these would prey heavily on the smolt runs passing through the impoundment, which might tend to hang about in the area during times of low flow. This view is supported by the results of Irish work on predation of smolts during their downstream migration through natural lakes on a river system.

(b) The Influence of Man

(i) Pollution

Rivers carrying stocks of salmon are not normally regarded as being 'polluted' in the accepted sense of the word. Nevertheless, the best of such rivers inevitably receive polluting discharges at one or more points in their length, in particular on their lower reaches. If a situation is to be avoided where a 'pollution barrier' to ascending fish builds up at times of low flow, or where temporary discharges of high toxicity occur, resulting in fish mortality, high standards must be applied to, and enforced upon, all effluents discharging to the river.

(ii) Abstraction

In the same way as with discharges of effluent, very careful consideration must be given to any proposals for water abstraction to ensure, as far as possible, that appropriate residual flows, particularly in dry weather conditions, are provided in the river. The benefits of the smaller natural rises in river level which can occur in summer should also be safeguarded, as appropriate and practicable, in abstraction arrangements. The value of artificial freshets requires much more investigation before any benefits which they may afford to fisheries can be assessed.

(iii) Netting

The penultimate paragraph of this Section is of interest, and is endorsed by recommendation 4 on page 45.

(iv) Poaching

The final paragraph of this Section raises a matter which has been before the Fisheries Committee of the former Association of River Authorities on a number of occasions, but which has received scant support from the Ministry: To Bailiff the salmon rivers of the area successfully is extremely difficult and a positive step to easing the problem could be the adoption of

a system of licencing dealers in game fish which has been introduced in Northern Ireland and is claimed to be operating efficiently. Identification of individual fish by means of numbered metal tags, combined with proof of entitlement on the part of the seller to take the fish and with adequate records which are open to inspection by the fisheries authorities or by the police on demand, with suitable penalties for infringements, would be likely to make the sale and purchase of illegally taken fish a far more hazardous affair to both seller and purchaser than is the case at present. If the licencing system were to be operated by the Regional Water Authority, and if the number of licenced dealers were to be kept to a minimum, the avenues available for disposal of poached salmon would be much less readily available to the poacher. It is the existence of ready buyers who ask no questions which simplifies what ought to be the most difficult part of the poacher's operations.

(c) Physiological

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Fish Pathology Laboratory was located at Weymouth in order to have it in an area which was free from, and likely to remain free from, the disease known as Ulcerative Dermal Necrosis, an outbreak of which was, at the time when the laboratory was set up, and still is, affecting salmon, sea trout and brown trout in many rivers in the British Isles. It is thus unreasonable to endorse the view expressed in the penultimate paragraph of this Section of the Report that such a laboratory should be located centrally in order to facilitate access. However, this does not mean that a Fish Pathology Laboratory dealing with, for example, diseases of freshwater fish could not co-exist with the Weymouth Laboratory, in the same way as do the two laboratories of the Freshwater Biological Association at Windermere and East Stoke in Dorset. Such a laboratory could be located in the Midlands giving easy access from all directions, especially if close to a motorway. This would leave Weymouth free to deal with diseases of migratory fish and general basic research on fish diseases. An alternative might be for Regional Water Authorities to set up their own small fish pathology laboratories with the necessary staff. The Weymouth laboratory would then provide an ultimate source of advice and specialised training. The setting up of a specialised laboratory of this kind is an expensive undertaking, particularly in terms of equipment, but this consideration might be outweighed by the convenience of having these facilities readily accessible within the Region.

6. Recommendations at End of Report

All the recommendations detailed are worthy of serious consideration, but numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 14 are considered to be particularly relevant.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYSOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE11TH SEPTEMBER, 1974"Coarse Fisheries" -A Report of the Working Party of the
Association of River Authorities

1. In September, 1972, the Association of River Authorities set up a Working Party whose terms of reference were as follows:-
 - (a) To examine and consider the present policies of coarse fishery management by River Authorities.
 - (b) To examine present facilities which provide services in support of coarse fishery management policies.
 - (c) To consider the particular requirements of coarse fisheries and to make recommendations as to how such requirements may be taken into account and catered for on a regional and national basis in future.
2. The Working Party has now completed its deliberations and a copy of the published report entitled "Coarse Fisheries" has been circulated to each member of this Committee.
3. Following consideration of the report members may wish to submit their observations thereon for inclusion in a report to the Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYSOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE11TH SEPTEMBER, 1974Purchase of Fisheries

1. In accordance with Minute No. 9 of the previous meeting of the Committee, the Regional Fisheries Officer presents the following comments on the question of whether or not the Authority should acquire fisheries or suitable waters which could be developed as fisheries.

2. (a) Points in Favour of Acquisition

If owned and managed by the Authority, as opposed, for example to a small syndicate, a fishery should provide recreational capacity for the maximum feasible number of anglers. Such an arrangement implies that there is likely to be less "elbow room" for each individual and that, at any rate on river fisheries, the quality of the fishing may be lower than would be the case if the water were to remain a more exclusive fishery. It should be possible, however, to manage the fishery in such a way that these factors do not result in conditions unacceptable to anglers. Ownership further enables the Authority to manage the fishery in the most advantageous way, having regard to its responsibilities, duties and functions under the Water Act, 1973.

Ownership of fisheries by the Authority makes available to licence holders, either free of charge or through the issue of day tickets, fishing which would probably not be available to them otherwise, except through membership of a club or association. There are considerable numbers of anglers who have no particular wish to join a club, but who have no option if they wish to have access to any fishing.

In addition to the purchase of fisheries, the possibility of leasing them should not be overlooked. In the long term this is an expensive way of making fishing available to the angling public. It does, however, offer a means of acquiring the use of waters from owners who, whilst they are unwilling to sell their rights would be prepared to allow public access to their waters, but have no wish to accept the administrative responsibilities involved. In such cases fishing rights could be made available to the public either free of charge or through the issue of day tickets.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that the purchase of fishing rights is a form of capital investment which, with the ever-increasing pressure on fishing space in this country, is more likely to appreciate than to depreciate in value. Capital expenditure of this kind is likely to be acceptable for loan sanction by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

- (b) Points Against Acquisition

A policy of purchasing or leasing fisheries, if pursued by the Authority, will sooner or later result in the Authority being in direct competition with some club or association for the acquisition of fishing rights. It is therefore essential to determine the Authority's policy in such a situation. If competition of this kind is acceptable, the Authority, with its much larger financial

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYSOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE11TH SEPTEMBER, 1974The Working of Langcliffe Rearing Station

1. The Regional Fisheries Officer presents a Report on the history and operation of Langcliffe Rearing Station, near Settle, which has been prepared by the Fisheries Officer of the Lancashire River Unit.
2. It will be seen from the summary on pages 7-10 inclusive that, apart from serious losses, in 1967-68 which were due to trouble with algae in the rearing tanks, the first seven years of operation produced results which were perfectly satisfactory by normal hatchery standards. It was only in 1970-71 that major losses began to occur regularly each year.

Due to the siltation of natural redds which occurs in the Ribble system, artificial propagation is essential for the continuance of the stocking programme which supports the population.

As this installation has operated satisfactorily in previous years, there appears to be no reason why it should not do so again, and the recommendations on page 13 are aimed at achieving this.

3. There can be no doubt that the use of a fixed trap (or traps) at some suitable point (or points) on the river is a less damaging method of obtaining adult fish for stripping than is the use of electric fishing equipment, and the provision of such a trap should be made at the earliest possible opportunity. Reduction of output, and thus of the number of tanks in use, will make it possible to devote more attention to the fish being reared, while parallel investigations into the various water quality criteria mentioned may well give an indication of the origin of the trouble experienced in recent years.
4. It is recommended that work at the rearing station should continue on the basis of the recommendations at the end of the Report.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYSOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE11TH SEPTEMBER, 1974Fisheries Estimates 1974-75

1. At the previous meeting of this Committee held on 10th June, 1974, members were provided with a summary of the fisheries estimates 1974-75 and the figures for the Lancashire River Unit were as follows:-

Expenditure:

	£
Administration	55,235
Bailiff Services	46,123
Maintenance and	
Development of Fisheries	16,454
Other	10,058
	<hr/>
	127,870

Income:

Licences and other	42,085
	<hr/>
Net Expenditure	85,785
	<hr/>

2. Members requested that further information relating to the figure of £10,058 shown in the Estimates under the heading "Other" be furnished at this meeting.
3. The figure is made up of two main items:-
- (a) Debt Charges - £4,443
(Principle and interest repayment on a loan of £18,000 taken out in 1970 to purchase Mitton Fishery).
 - (b) Recharged from other services - £5,615
(Apportioned central salaries and establishment charges).

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYSOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE11TH SEPTEMBER, 1974Report by Unit Fisheries Officer on Fisheries Activities1. Coarse Fish Salvage and Stocking

Fish were netted and removed from two lakes at Darwen and Blackburn and transferred to nearby waters at the request of the local Angling Clubs. In both cases the lakes were being drained and altogether 550 fish were saved.

2. Poaching Activity

Poaching has been rife throughout the area, and is especially prevalent around Clitheroe. Bailiffs have been engaged solely on anti-poaching activities when river conditions have been suitable for poaching.

3. Fishery Prosecutions by Lancashire River Unit

Reports received prior to 1st April, 1974	26
Reports received since 1st April, 1974	126

152

Reports resulting in Court Hearings	59
Reports resulting in Warning Letters	3
Reports resulting in False Name and Address	7
Not proceeded with	8
	<hr/> 77

Outstanding:-

Set down for Hearing	28
Deferred to Headquarters	14
Being processed at the present time	33

152

4. Fisheries Management

Investigations at Langcliffe Rearing Station designed to produce information on conditions in the fish tanks during periods of high temperature have been hampered due to prevailing weather conditions.

5. Biological Work

Investigations into an outbreak of fish disease at Hoddlesdon Reservoir have been carried out. The fish examined had a very severe infestation of Argulus causing wounds which were subsequently being infected by bacteria.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYSOUTH LANCASHIRE FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE11TH SEPTEMBER, 1974Schedule of Meetings

1. The Authority, as required by Rule 1, has already approved a timetable of meetings of the Authority, Committees and Sub-Committees with the exception of the five Local Fisheries Advisory Committees, which are, in the Rules of the Authority regarded as Sub-Committees of the Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee.
2. A time table for the Local Fisheries Advisory Committees has therefore been prepared which dovetails with that approved by the Authority and is submitted herewith as an Appendix for the information of members prior to being placed on the Agenda for consideration and approval by the Regional Fisheries Advisory Committee meeting to be held on 30th September, 1974.
3. For the information of the Committee the Authority is required by Rule No. 1, at the Annual Meeting, to consider a programme of meetings up to and including the date of the next Annual Meeting and such a time table for 1975-76 will be presented to the Annual Meeting on 23rd June, 1975.

NORTH WEST WATER AUTHORITYREGIONAL AND LOCAL FISHERIES ADVISORY COMMITTEESSCHEDULE OF MEETINGSFisheries Advisory CommitteeDate of Meeting

South and West Cumberland
Eden and District
Lune, Wyre and Furness
South Lancashire
Mersey and Weaver

Monday, 2nd December, 1974.
Tuesday, 3rd December, 1974.
Monday, 9th December, 1974.
Wednesday, 11th December, 1974.
Monday, 16th December, 1974.

REGIONAL

Monday, 6th January, 1975

South and West Cumberland
Eden and District
Lune, Wyre and Furness
South Lancashire
Mersey and Weaver

Monday, 13th January, 1975.
Tuesday, 14th January, 1975.
Monday, 20th January, 1975.
Wednesday, 22nd January, 1975.
Monday, 27th January, 1975.

REGIONAL

Monday, 24th February, 1975.

South and West Cumberland
Eden and District
Lune, Wyre and Furness
South Lancashire
Mersey and Weaver

Monday, 28th April, 1975.
Tuesday, 29th April, 1975.
Monday, 5th May, 1975.
Wednesday, 7th May, 1975.
Monday, 12th May, 1975.

REGIONAL

Monday, 2nd June, 1975.